



# Recidivism of Juvenile Offenders

## Fiscal Year 2005

### Overview

During Fiscal Year 2005, Washington courts entered 13,127 juvenile dispositions<sup>1</sup>. Approximately 77% of the offenders were boys and approximately 76% (9,937) of the dispositions involved offenders who had a history of one or more prior offenses<sup>2</sup>. For purposes of this report, the term “recidivism” includes any disposition in which the offender’s juvenile history contains a disposition. The overall rate of recidivism for boys was 77% compared to 72% among girls (Table 1).

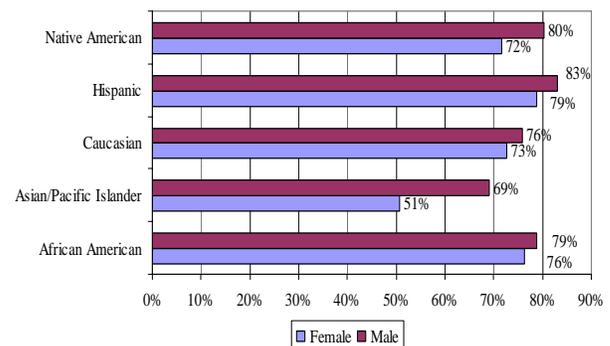
**Table 1: Demographics**

	Total Sentence	Recidivist	Recidivism rate	% of Juvenile population
<b>Gender</b>				
Female	2,953	2,133	72.23%	48.75%
Male	10,174	7,804	76.71%	51.25%
<b>Race/Ethnicity<sup>3</sup></b>				
African Am.	1,669	1,303	78.07%	3.94%
Asian/Pacific Islander	378	246	65.08%	5.98%
Caucasian	8,178	6,145	75.14%	69.23%
Hispanic	1,824	1,501	82.29%	13.71%
Native American	620	480	77.42%	5.29%

African Americans account for 3.94% of the population in Washington and a disproportionately high 13.11% of all juvenile dispositions, yet had a recidivism rate of 78.07%. The recidivism rate of Hispanics<sup>4</sup> was the highest of all racial groups at 82.29%. Asian/Pacific Islanders experienced the smallest recidivism rate, 65.08%. Caucasians, the largest segment of the general population, 69.23%, accounted for 61.84% of all juvenile dispositions and had a recidivism rate of 75.14%.

Asian/Pacific Islander girls received the smallest number of sentences and accounted for the lowest overall recidivism rate, 50.63%. Hispanic boys had the highest rate of recidivism, at 82.97% (See Figure 1 and Table 2).

**Figure 1: Recidivism by Race and Gender**



<sup>1</sup> Juveniles adjudicated for criminal offenses receive a disposition rather than a sentence. The term disposition is used interchangeably with “sentence” in this report.

<sup>2</sup> The SGC database does not contain data relating to dates of release from confinement. As such, unlike some other studies, the length of time between convictions has not been factored into this report.

<sup>3</sup> Race/Ethnicity was missing on 262 recidivists

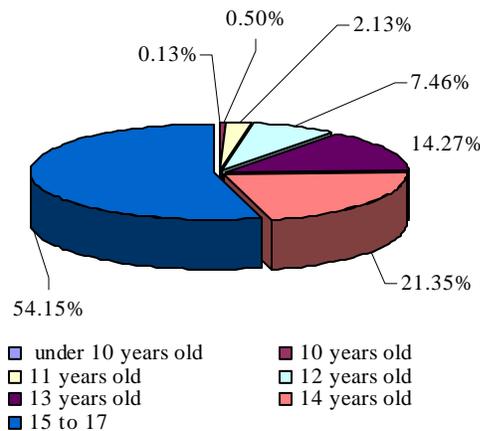
<sup>4</sup> Although the United States Census Bureau does not include Hispanic in its list of “races,” due to the relatively large segment of Washington’s population identified as “Hispanic” and in the interest of clarifying disproportional issues, persons of Hispanic ethnicity have been placed in this group regardless of race.

**Table 2: Recidivism by Race and Gender**

	Recidivist		Recidivism Rate	
	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys
African American	315	988	76.27%	78.66%
Asian/Pacific Islander	40	206	50.63%	68.90%
Caucasian	1,334	4,811	72.78%	75.82%
Hispanic	239	1,262	78.88%	82.97%
Native American	144	336	71.64%	80.19%

During Fiscal Year 2005, there were 3,190 dispositions involving first time juvenile offenders. Most first time offenders were 15 to 17 years old. This age group accounted for 1,727 of the 3,190 first time offenders' cases (see figure 2).

**Figure 2: Age at First Offense**



The average age of first time offenders, 15.13 years old, was slightly lower than the average of repeat offenders, 15.90 years old. Girls tended to re-offend at a younger age, 15.83 years old, compared to boys at 15.92 years old. As was the case with first time offenders, the highest percentage of recidivism occurred among offenders between 15 to 17 years old (See Table 3).

**Table 3: Age Range of Recidivists<sup>5</sup>**

Age range	Total Sentence	Recidivist	Recidivism rate
under 10 years old	9	5	55.56%
10 years old	29	13	44.83%
11 years old	97	29	29.90%
12 years old	442	204	46.15%
13 years old	1,137	682	59.98%
14 years old	2,214	1,533	69.24%
15 to 17 years old	9,191	7,464	81.21%

**Offense Group**

For purposes of this report, offenses are categorized into eleven primary groups: assault, drug, gross misdemeanor, manslaughter, misdemeanor, murder 1, murder 2, property, robbery, sex, and other felonies.

Nearly half of the first time offenders committed gross misdemeanors (Table 4). Property crimes were the second most common offenses committed by first-time offenders. These offenders rarely committed more serious offenses such as robbery and drug offenses.

**Table 4: First Time Offender by Offense Group**

Crime Type	First Time Offender	Percentage
Assault	197	6.20%
Drug	82	2.58%
Gross Misdemeanor	1,534	48.27%
Manslaughter	5	0.16%
Misdemeanor	215	6.77%
Other Felony	114	3.59%
Property	783	24.64%
Robbery	44	1.38%
Sex	204	6.42%

Similar to the pattern of first offenses, the most frequent prior offenses were misdemeanors and gross misdemeanors, followed by property offenses (Table 5).

<sup>5</sup> Small numbers tend to produce unstable recidivism rates.

**Table 5: Recidivism by Type of Offense**

Crime Type	Total Sentence	Recidivist	Recidivism rate
Assault	593	396	66.78%
Drug	308	226	73.38%
Gross Misdemeanor	7,253	5,719	78.85%
Manslaughter	10	5	50.00%
Misdemeanor	1,365	1,150	84.25%
Murder 1	1	1	100.00%
Murder 2	1	1	100.00%
Other Felony	410	296	72.20%
Property	2,701	1,918	71.01%
Robbery	137	93	67.88%
Sex	290	86	29.66%

This offense pattern was the same among boy and girl offenders (Table 6).

**Table 6: Recidivism by Gender and Type of Offense.**

Crime	Recidivism		Recidivism percentage	
	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys
Assault	69	370	2.10%	3.30%
Drug	53	191	1.61%	1.70%
Gross Misdemeanor	1,584	4,950	48.13%	44.17%
Manslaughter	1	4	0.03%	0.04%
Misdemeanor	1,221	3,486	37.10%	31.11%
Murder 1		1	0.00%	0.01%
Murder 2		1	0.00%	0.01%
Other Felony	60	341	1.82%	3.04%
Property	298	1,686	9.05%	15.04%
Robbery	4	91	0.12%	0.81%
Sex	1	86	0.03%	0.77%

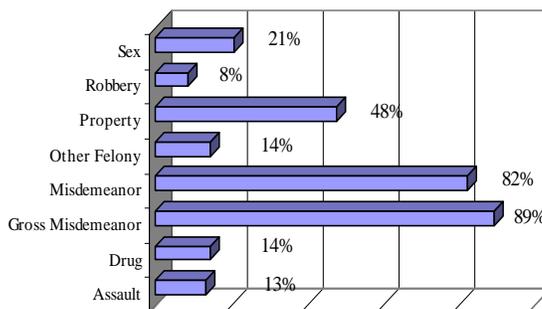
As expected, the lowest recidivism rates were found among the more serious offenses such as murder and sex crimes. These offenses were committed at the lowest overall rates of current and past offenses (Table 7).

**Table 7: Present and Past Sentences by Recidivists**

Crime Type	Present Offense	Present Percentage	Prior Offense	Prior Percentage
Assault	439	3.03%	772	3.42%
Drug	244	1.68%	330	1.46%
Gross Misdemeanor	6,534	45.07%	8,797	39.02%
Misdemeanor	4,707	32.47%	8,036	35.64%
Manslaughter	5	0.03%	3	0.01%
Murder 1	1	0.01%		
Murder 2	1	0.01%		
Other Felony	401	2.77%	751	3.33%
Property	1,984	13.68%	3,478	15.43%
Robbery	95	0.66%	212	0.94%
Sex	87	0.60%	166	0.74%

A subset of recidivists includes a group of offenders whose current criminal behavior was the same type as that committed at least once in the past. These offenders are sometimes referred to as habitual offenders, though state statutes generally apply this term to persons who are repeatedly arrested for any criminal behavior.

**Figure 3: Same Criminal Conduct Offense Group**



As illustrated by figure 3, youths whose current offenses fell within misdemeanor and gross misdemeanor crime types were extremely likely to have engaged in the same criminal conduct. In the past, property offenders were the next most likely habitual offenders. Robbery recidivists were found to be the least likely habitual offenders.

**Table 8: Violent Offenses**

Current offense	Prior offense	Total
Non-Violent	Non-Violent	9,466
Non-Violent	Violent	304
Violent	Non-Violent	110
Violent	Violent	50

Most of the 13,127 sentences entered in Fiscal Year 2005 involved non-violent offenses. Similarly, most recidivists, 9,466, were non-violent offenders who had also committed non-violent offenses in the past (Table 8).

**Recidivism as Adult Offenders**

During Fiscal Year 2005, of the 28,527 adult sentences, 4,412 of those offenders had a history of juvenile offenses. There were 1,352 adult offenders whose history consisted of only juvenile offenses.

In some instances adult criminal courts have original jurisdiction over certain violent criminal offenses committed by juveniles who are 16 or 17 years old. Some crimes result in an “automatic decline” to adult court. In Fiscal Year 2005 there were approximately 78 juveniles automatically declined to adult court.

In addition, adult criminal courts are authorized to assert jurisdiction over juveniles when the juvenile court exercises its discretion to decline jurisdiction. The SGC identified 64 possible discretionary declines in Fiscal Year 2005.

Because cases involving youths tried as adults are not processed in juvenile courts, information about the disposition of those cases and the prior histories of the offenders are not contained in the SGC’s juvenile database and are not included in this report.

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<b>Data</b>	
<p>The juvenile disposition data contained in this report was collected from Washington Disposition forms sent to the Sentencing Guidelines Commission (SGC) by the courts and includes all juvenile dispositions known to have been imposed between July 1, 2004 and June 30, 2005 (Fiscal Year 2005). Data elements entered into the SGC database and used in this report include race, ethnicity, gender, and type of sentence, current offense, offense history, offender score, the imposed confinement term and community supervision term.</p> <p>Comments or questions may be directed to:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Sentencing Guidelines Commission P.O. Box 40927 Olympia, WA 98504-0927 IdaL@sgc.wa.gov</p>	